



I don't want to join the frauds and cheats, says part-timer Lee

BRIAN LEE would not cross the road to take control of a Football League club — even if Wycombe Wanderers achieved the impossible and knocked Middlesbrough out of the FA Cup, went on to Wembley and brought offers raining round the ears of their manager.

Lee — director of the Bisham Abbey national sports centre, Justice of the Peace and spare-time manager of Wycombe Wanderers — will be more shocked than Jack Charlton if Middlesbrough slide down the Loakes Park slope to third-round defeat this afternoon.

But whatever the progress of the Rothmans Isthmian League side Lee would remain a part-timer dedicated to non-League Football.

Lee says: 'Professional football and professional footballers make me sick. I wouldn't want to manage a League club, even though I

know that 75 per cent. of the people controlling these clubs are frauds so there is no reason why I shouldn't survive.

'Look at the League managers. The majority of them are cheating. The genuine ones are making themselves ill with worry about being let down on the pitch by the prima donnas they call professional footballers.

'It makes me laugh when I hear them complaining about playing 60 games a season. Our lads at Wycombe played 86 matches last season, and loved every minute.

'We get as many injuries in



JEFF POWELL
meets the cup manager
without a care.

training as we do in competitive matches, because they are keen and throw themselves into everything.

'The FA made a major mistake when they tried to overcome amateurism by doing away with amateur status. They destroyed a whole level of the game and removed from a lot of good players the incentive to get amateur international caps.'

Lee cited the case of Mike Hollifield, the midfield man who was yesterday cleared to face Middlesbrough with a lightweight plaster on his fractured wrist.

players if they continue to do well. But at the moment they are all running and trying and working so that we have no chance of overcoming their superior skill.

'I have told my players they are going out just to play for their pride, not to give Middlesbrough anything they don't deserve and keep the score honourable. They respect my honesty . . . and nurse their own fantasies about the outside chance of pulling off a shock.'

Since there is an honesty about Brian Lee which deserves respect, I willingly endorse his opinion that Middlesbrough rank among the favourites for the FA Cup and include them in my last eight:

Leeds, Liverpool, Everton, Manchester City, Aston Villa, Queen's Park Rangers, Middlesbrough, Derby.

Lee said: 'Mike is a good player. But he is too intelligent a boy to become a professional footballer. Why should he put up with all the boredom that goes with being a pro when he can enjoy his life and enjoy his football as well?'

Lee's disenchantment with professionalism does not extend to Middlesbrough, or Jack Charlton. He says: 'There is a good manager who works hard to organise a team. They have no real weaknesses and no prima donnas.'

'In a year or two he might have problems with one or two